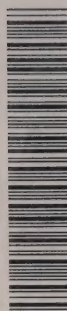


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PACKING PEACHES FOR EXPORT

INDUSTRIAL SERIES NO. 2



ONTARIO

THE DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT
QUEEN'S PARK — TORONTO

WRAPPING AND PACKAGING
ONTARIO FRUIT
FOR EXPORT AND DOMESTIC MARKETS

Canadians in Great Britain, noting the high prices that Italian and South African peaches were bringing on the London market, raised the question with Ontario House regarding the possibilities of shipping Ontario peaches to the British market. Some interested Canadians reported after investigation that they were quite convinced that there was a potential post-war market for Canadian peaches in Great Britain.

The Trade and Industry Branch of the Department of Planning and Development has discussed the matter with the Ontario and Dominion Departments of Agriculture, and representatives of the Ontario Fruit Growers and Fruit Exporters Association.

The information we have received from the above sources indicates that serious attempts have been made to market Ontario peaches in Great Britain, but with indifferent results, due to a number of factors, which, at the time, were more or less beyond control. For instance:

The British market is inclined to be partial to the light coloured variety of peaches and prefer these varieties to the yellow varieties usually grown in Ontario. Mr. R. S. Willison, plant pathologist at the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology, St. Catharines, Ontario, says:-- "According to comments from the London dealers, small peaches are not profitable. Size should not be less than that of large No. 1's. This factor is in itself another argument in favour of sending the more mature fruits. The Elberta variety is probably our best shipper, but its flavour is not entirely suitable for dessert purposes, particularly after cold storage. For that reason, Vedette or Valiant are preferable. Rochester can be sent if up to standard size and if special precautions are taken against brown rot. A number of other

firm shipping varieties could be used. Golden Jubilee is too soft. The British market has a marked preference for white fleshed varieties of which we have too few good ones here. Carmen, probably the best white fleshed variety we have, was well received. But there are few plantings of Carmen in the district and it is doubtful if its culture should be urged."

Fresh peaches on foreign markets must be considered a luxury trade. Therefore any producer considering this market must be prepared to exercise the greatest care in the growing and inspection as well as in the wrapping and packaging of his fruit.

To deliver Ontario peaches in Great Britain in a marketable condition and with their full flavour and lusciousness preserved has in the past, necessitated considerable expense for packing and shipping.

The investigations of this department indicate however, that there has been developed in recent years, some new techniques in the packing of peaches, apples, plums, and other fruit that might enable us to overcome many of the difficulties encountered in the past and make it possible to successfully export Ontario fruit.

It is also quite possible that some of these newer methods of wrapping and packaging might make it possible to distribute Ontario fruit throughout Canada in a marketable condition and at less expense than is possible with existing methods.

It is also possible that these newer methods of wrapping and packaging might be of considerable value in delivering fruit to local markets in a more attractive, more sanitary and better general condition.

Packing Problems

The problem presented in the export of perishable fruits is how to retain the freshness and quality throughout the long period involved in transportation. After the fruit is harvested it continues to carry on its life process, and its activities are even greater, since it must maintain its life on the food products within itself. Here lies the danger of deterioration through loss of moisture and attack by fungi or bacteria.

Various methods to safeguard against deterioration during transit have been devised, such as surface treatments, wrapping and refrigeration. The nature of

the wrapper must be such, as to slow down the breathing process of the fruit, (thereby slackening evaporation) yet not stop it completely. Great care must be taken in selecting the particular method of surface treatment or wrapping. What might be suitable for a particular fruit may be entirely unsuitable for another. What may be suitable for a particular fruit under one set of conditions consigned to a particular market, might be entirely unsuitable for that particular fruit under a different set of conditions.

Growers of fancy fruit in Egypt, Sicily and Southern Tyrol, used waxed tissue which worked satisfactorily. In some cases, bags of cellophane or waxed paper were placed over the individual fruit while still ripening on the tree. The fruit was harvested with the bag on and shipped in this wrapper, with the bits of leaves and stem in the bag.

Considerable experimental work was being carried on with these newer types of wrapping and packaging just before the war. Most of the experimental work has been held up due to the diversion of wrapping and packaging material for other purposes. It is hoped that ample supplies of such wrapping and packaging materials will be available for the 1946 crop.

Manufacturers of these new wrapping and packaging materials will be only too glad to co-operate with fruit growers and exporters in practical experiments to determine the most suitable material and method as applied to any particular fruit under any particular set of conditions.

The Fruit Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and the Division of Botany and Plant Pathology of the Dominion Department of Agriculture have considerable information on the subject.

Mechanical Handling and Wrapping

Experimental work to date seems to indicate that best results are obtained by handling, wrapping and packaging the fruit mechanically. This means that growers contemplating export of fruit must be prepared to install the necessary mechanical handling, wrapping, and packaging machinery.

The necessity for installing such mechanical equipment suggests the impracticability of the small grower contemplating export markets. However, if the

larger growers install such mechanical equipment to prepare fruit for export they will undoubtedly use it for fruit consigned to domestic markets. The improved condition of such fruit coming on the domestic markets might make it necessary for a very large percentage of the growers to adopt such methods.

The more or less general use of mechanical equipment for handling, wrapping, and packaging fruit should create a fairly substantial local market for such mechanical equipment.

There are a number of metal manufacturing industries in or contiguous to the fruit producing areas which might consider the manufacturing of such equipment as a profitable post-war project.

Such mechanical equipment and machinery is being manufactured and used. Financial arrangements can be made with present designers and manufacturers in the United States, whereby such equipment can be manufactured in Ontario on a royalty basis.

In fact, production, canning, and preserving of fruit and vegetables in Ontario is fast reaching proportions that should suggest the possibilities of manufacturing this special machinery and mechanical equipment here in Canada.

Bibliography

For further detailed information regarding new methods and materials for wrapping and packaging fruit and for information regarding the necessary mechanical equipment, we suggest communicating with the following:--

Division of Botany and Plant Pathology,
Department of Agriculture,
St. Catharines, Ontario.

Fruit Branch, Ontario Department of Agriculture,
Toronto, Ontario.

Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Canada, Ltd.,
Special Products Division,
New Toronto, Toronto 14, Ont.

Crown Willamette Paper Company,
343 Sansome Street,
San Francisco, California.

